



BUDGET BRIEFS

Charter School Trailer Bill 2001-02 Budget

Key Trailer Bill Provisions

- ✍️ **Funding Deductions.** Senator O'Connell introduced, and the conference committee approved on a 4-2 vote, trailer bill language to reduce the funding to "non-classroom based charter schools" by 30 percent over the next three years. Funding will be reduced to not more than 90 percent in 2001-02, not more than 80 percent the next year, and not more than 70 percent in 2003-04.
- ✍️ **Approval Process.** In addition, no charter school will receive any funding for non-classroom based pupils unless the State Board of Education (SBE) approves, commencing July 1, 2002. The SBE would be permitted to waive the funding deduction, based on regulations to be adopted by the SBE.
- ✍️ **Facilities Funding.** At the same time, regular charter schools located in poor areas will receive \$750 per pupil for the costs of facilities rents and leases, including renovation and site improvement. The Budget will contain a line item appropriating \$10 million for this purpose contingent on legislation.

COMMENTS

- ✍️ **Heavy-Handed Approach.** While some non-classroom based school programs may benefit from additional scrutiny, the proposal applies only to charter schools. In addition, no data has been provided justifying the 30-percent reduction (beyond the proponent's statements that non-classroom based instruction must be cheaper to provide).
- ✍️ **Double Standard.** Over 60,000 students participate in independent study programs statewide, many through "regular" public schools. No legislation has been introduced to reduce "regular school" independent study per pupil funding.
- ✍️ **Remedies Exist in Current Law.** Education Code Section 47604.5 permits the SBE, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), to revoke any charter when the SBE finds "gross financial mismanagement or illegal or substantially improper use of...funds for personal benefit." Has the SPI made any such recommendations? Has the SBE asked the SPI to look into any charters?
- ✍️ **Back-Room Law Making at Its Worst.** The Legislature this year made extra efforts to ensure that all major policy bills went through the normal legislative process of public notifications, hearings in appropriate policy committees, and forums in which public testimony is taken. The charter school funding reduction proposal has not had any public hearing in any policy committee of the Legislature.

For further information, please contact Roger Mackensen at (916) 324-5391